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Jules Gouffé (1807-77)

'If, owing to the improvements and rules of I recommend, I learn that, between now and a few years hence, everyone eats of the best according to his means; that, on the one hand, Domestic Cookery, is carried on with care, economy, and comfort; and, on the other hand, the Higher Cookery is practiced with that tastefulness and éclat which an age of refinement and luxury such as ours demands – I shall be fully satisfied with the result, and well rewarded for my labor.'

Jules Gouffé in the introduction to his grand piece
'Le Livre de cuisine' (Gouffé (1867):xii)

References/Further reading

Gouffé, J. (1867): 'Le Livre de cuisine'

Davidson, Alan (2006): The Oxford Companion to Food, Oxford

Mennel, Stephen (1996): All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present, University of Illinois

Gouffé, J. (1873): 'Le Livre de cuisine'



Jules Gouffé
(Gouffé (1873))

Jules Gouffé was born in Paris in 1807. He was one of three sons by the Parisian confectioner Louis Gouffé who had his own shop on Neuve Saint-Merri, in Paris. All the sons followed in their father's footsteps.

When Gouffé was 16 years old he was talented enough to create the display pieces in the window of his father's shop. One day his work caught the eye of a by-passer – the famous confectioner and chef Carême (1783-1833), who immediately recruited him to his 'brigade de cuisine'. Jules Gouffé worked under Carême for the following seven years, where he was schooled both as a confectioner and the culinary arts in general. He later wrote:

published 'Le Livre des conserves' and again in 1873 'Le Livre de pâtisserie'. Together with his first book 'Le Livre de cuisine' they dealt with all aspects of the French kitchen. Also his last volume about soups from 1875 was reprinted until the 20th century.

The name Jules Gouffé was later given to a dish consisting of small pieces of sautéed meat, coated with Madeira flavored sauce, and served with potato nests filled with morels in cream and butter roasted asparagus.

cooking and professional cooking as two separate but respected disciplines within good cooking.

Gouffé did not have the perception, as many did in the mid-1800's, that the French kitchen was in decay and could never reach the same level. As he wrote in his preface in the book 'Le Livre de cuisine' *"(...) good and true things never die; there may be time for weakness, but, with work, intelligence, and good will, sooner or later there is a recovery."* (Gouffé (1867):xi)

The book was a great success, not only in France, where a lot of the later editions were published – it also gained recognition abroad and got translated into several languages. In 1869 Jules Gouffé

"A good pastry chef can become an excellent cook, but one rarely hears of a man trained as a cook who goes on to master pastry."

(Davidson (2006): 348)

He himself excelled in both professions from a young age, which paved the way for a magnificent career as a chef in significant households. According to the book 'All Manners of Food' he made his fortune in just 15 years, from 1840 to 1855 where he owned a restaurant at rue du Faubourg Saint-Honor in Paris. He was obviously a supporter of 'grande cuisine' and his dishes were all elaborately designed and presented – just like Carême's.

He was tempted back from his retirement a decade later by the gourmets Baron Brisse and Alexandre Dumas, who persuaded him to become head chef at the Jockey Club de Paris. The club, which had opened in 1834, was a place where all of the French elite met in the 19th century and it was situated at rue Rabelais no. 2 close to Champs-Élysées.

The last part of his life Jules Gouffé wrote a series of cookery books in an attempt to sum up all the experience he had gained and make it available not only for other chefs but also for housewives.

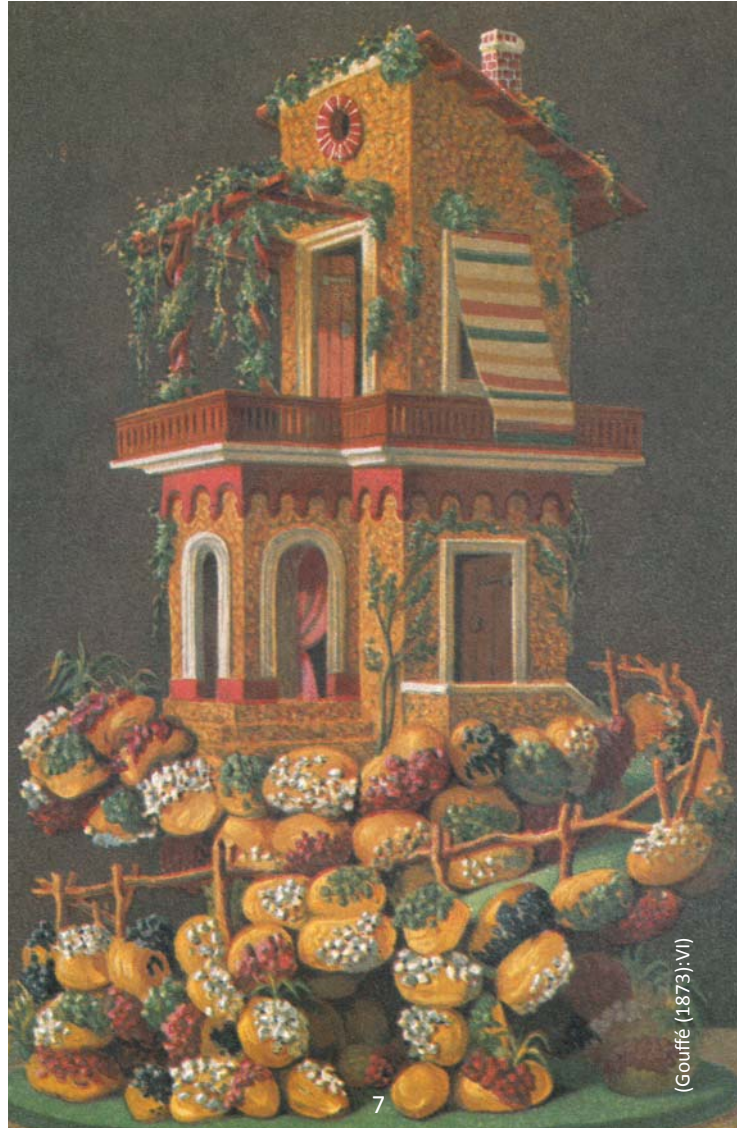
His first and most successful book was 'Le Livre de cuisine' from 1867. It was a comprehensive piece with almost 900 pages, and featured several innovations in the profession. The typographical

part was about 'grande cuisine', the professional kitchen. First part featured, besides recipes, also explanations on the most used phrases in the kitchen, a description of a chef's instruments, advice on how to set a table and basic principles used in the kitchen. Even the most inexperienced chef could in this way learn to cook from scratch. Both parts included countless recipes from all the aspects of the French kitchen, from starters, poultry and fish to pies, cakes and desserts.

Initially it would seem like Gouffé, who belonged to the elite of the French kitchen, gave cooking for everyday life unusual amounts of attention and respect. But in his preface of his book one can interpretate it as if he tried to establish everyday



(Gouffé (1873):7)



(Gouffé (1873):vi)

design was clear and spacious, and the book was illustrated beautifully with 200 engravings by Laplante and with color lithographs by Ronjat. Mrs. Beeton's 'Book of Household Management' had also featured this kind of lithographs seven years earlier, but the book written by Jules Gouffé was the first French cookery book with lithographs. Gouffé had a lucid style of writing, that was comprehensive to all, and he thereby showed a talent for writing, as great as his talent for cooking.

'Le Livre de cuisine' was furthermore the first cookery book to use metrical measurements and the cooking time was systematically indicated. The book contained two parts: The first part dealt with cooking for everyday life, and the second



(Gouffé (1873):286)